

Web site Design Brief - template

Information

In order to develop and design a new website it is essential that you write a design brief. A design brief will help you to decide on the essential elements of your website and will speed up the production time when the site goes into development.

This brief should contain information on your business to help a web designer or developer. This document is often referred to in the process of web design and development.

For a design brief to be effective, it must clearly communicate your requirements whilst allowing opportunity for innovation, ie what you want the website to do so a developer can explore ideas to create it.

The following template offers information that should be used in a design brief for the development of a new website. You should carefully consider these important issues to ensure your site is exactly what your company needs and can afford.

Template document begins on next page

Introduction

In this section, summarise what your company requires, ie what do you want from the web designers/developers. You should write this section after completing the rest of the brief, summarising the entire document.

This introduction can often be used as an initial contact document to web designers.

About your company

Concisely describe your business and its background, including information such as:

- what sort of business you are in, eg products you sell or services you provide
- when was your business established or when do you hope to start
- where is your market - local, national, international
- the size of your company, eg number of employees, financial status
- your company values, image, personality and brand, ie describe the unique identity of your company
- your competition and how their websites look and their strengths and weaknesses
- Unique Selling Proposition (USP) - give specific examples about what makes your company the best and include testimonials from satisfied customers

Current Marketing

You should describe all forms of media that you presently use to market your company, eg advert in a local or national paper, leaflet distribution, word of mouth.

Target Audience

In this section identify your target audience/typical customer by their age, gender, disposable income, interests, jobs and anything else that will help to define the website needed to attract potential customers. You can also describe:

- your future or desired customer or user
- how your product or service benefits customers/users
- the current alternative products or services your customers/users have

Web designer requirements

The amount of money you want to spend on the website will determine the scope of the site and what kind of web designer you can afford. Another important factor is when you want the site to go live (appear on the internet) and you will need to set a deadline for this.

You will need to decide on what you expect a designer to deliver in terms of a website, for example:

- a domain name - eg www.mywebsite.co.uk
- hosting - online computer space for your website
- e-mail facility

- a new company logo
- copy writing/content production and proof reading
- artwork - photography, illustrations, animation, video
- sound
- database development
- special requirements - multiple languages, accessibility, specific technologies

You should also describe the scale of the project by either estimating how many pages you want to be in the site or the number of individual products or services the site will cover.

You should also have a point of contact within your company who can communicate with a designer throughout the entire process, answering questions and making important decisions.

Website format

Here you need to give reasons for wanting a website and the format it would take, for example do you want to:

- improve brand awareness or expand traditional marketing materials such as advertising and brochures
- sell products, advice or services
- establish business relationships with customers by giving something away or offering discounts in return for contact details for future/further offers and information
- provide customer information or advice in return for a fee
- advertise vacancies or attract suitable applicants
- provide a free public service

Website features/content

You should list the main elements that you desire in a website, such as:

- company information, client list, project portfolio
- contact details, location map, enquiry form
- product information - current and future products
- news and press releases

Some of these elements may already exist within your company or they may need to be created from scratch. You should also consider how often you want the content of your website to be updated and who will perform this task, eg in-house or external.

A good way to help you decide on both features and content and style of a website is to find sites that you like and offer them as examples to the web designer.

Accomplishments

You will need to decide how you will measure the success of your website. It could be measured by how high it appears in a search list (search engine ranking) or by how many

people access the site (website traffic). Often the success of a website is based upon the number of enquiries, sales, bookings or subscriptions made.

Marketing

You will need to decide on the marketing strategy for your website. You will need to decide on how to improve the visibility of your website, ie how people will find it online. Search engine optimisation (SEO), marketing and registrations target different ways of exposing your website to potential visitors. This can be via sponsored listings or by editing content to increase the number of keywords which show up in a general web search.

You will also need to estimate the number of visitors you aim to attract per month and how many of them will buy or use your services. This will help you to calculate how much customers/users will spend (or use) on average.

Hosting Requirements

You will either need your own server (hardware and software that delivers your web content to the internet) to host your website or a space on an external server.

Conclusion

You should use this brief template to approach website designers or design companies to obtain a detailed fee proposal and details on how they propose to meet your requirements. Depending on the scope of the site, you may be required to provide additional information.